Chapter 1: Summary

Alice, who has been half-asleep and talking to herself, notices that her ball of yarn has come unraveled. She blames the mischief on Kitty, who is not the middle of being cleaned by Dinah. While she scolds Kitty, she imagines that Kitty responds defiantly to all of her accusations.

Alice then becomes distracted by the winter weather, commenting on how the boys were gathering wood for the bonfire but that it soon became too cold for the activity. She muses about the changing seasons, speculating that during the winter, the trees and fields must sleep beneath the blanket of snow, but that in spring and summer, they turn green and dance. The narrator remarks meanwhile that Alice is prone to flights of fancy which often begin with her saying "let's pretend."

Alice, who has been trying to get Kitty to imitate the Red Queen chess piece, turns her attention to the looking glass, in which she imagines that there is another home, very much like her own, but in which some things are reversed. She wishes longingly for the glass to dissolve so that she can step into that other world. Suddenly, the glass becomes misty, and Alice enters the alternate universe that is a reflection of her own world.

Inside, she notices that there is a fire like the one in her hearth. She notices that the clock has the face of an old man which smiles at her. She also sees that the room is not kept as tidy as the one she left, for there are chess pieces all over the floor. When she gets closer to them, she realizes that they are talking and moving.

The White Queen seems to have lost her daughter, Lily, so Alice decides to reunite them by lifting up the Queen and setting her back on the table. The Queen seems to think that she has been relocated by a volcano, as they are near the fire, so Alice concludes that she cannot be seen or heard in this world. She does the same for the King, and also dusts him off, all of which makes him extremely frightened.

She notices a book and tries to read, but at first, she does not understand the language. Then she realizes that the text must be reversed since she is in the looking-glass world, so she holds the book up to the glass. The text is revealed to be the poem Jabberwocky, the language of which she still does not understand. Alice, feeling like she will not have time to see everything if she lingers, floats downstairs and out the door to explore the garden.

Analysis

Lewis Carroll was known for his love of contrast, so it makes sense that this book opens with a scene indoors in the middle of winter. Alice in Wonderland, contrarily, opened on a sunny May afternoon. The date is also significant, for when Alice is talking to Kitty, she implies that there is going to be a holiday the following day. She is in fact referring to Guy Fawkes Day, November 5th, the night before which was traditionally celebrated with a bonfire at Christ Church, where Carroll studied, lived, and wrote.

The kitten Snowdrop is an example of Carroll including elements from his own life in his literature. He was good friends with a man named George Macdonald, whose daughter Mary had a kitten named Snowdrop. It is actually this family that played a large role in encouraging Carroll to publish Alice in Wonderland, so perhaps the mention of the kitten Snowdrop is a subtle thanks to them.

In this chapter, the reader is introduced to the theme of inversion, which is pervasive throughout the book. Carroll was in fact obsessed with this notion in real life. He wrote some of his letters in mirror writing, and some he wrote starting with the last word and ending with the first. He also drew pictures that turned into other pictures when they were turned upside down.

It is unclear why he nurtured this obsession. One explanation, judged to be inadequate, is that he was left-handed but was forced to use his right, so the inversion techniques were a part of some grand revenge for
this travesty. Carroll did do a great deal of work in mathematics and logic, and it is perhaps this passion that encouraged him to explore logical contradiction.

The inclusion of the poem "Jabberwocky" in the book is anything but random. The poem is universally considered to be the greatest nonsense poem in the English language, and it was incredibly popular, especially among schoolboys, during the late 19th century. Carroll originally wanted to put the entire poem in reversed form, but inevitably decided on just the first verse. In a periodical Carroll wrote at the age of 23 to amuse his friends, he provided explanations for all the nonsense words in the first verse, all of which vary from Humpy Dumpty's versions later in the book.

Later work in physics confirmed that there would be dire consequences for the Alice that entered the Looking-Glass world. It is clear that she remained herself when she entered, because she has to hold the book up to a mirror to read it. In this case, her normal matter would clash with all the anti-matter around her, and there would likely be an explosion. This is humorous in light of her speculation about Looking-Glass milk, which is most likely not at all nutritional.

**Summary and Analysis of Chapter 2**

**Summary**

Alice follows the path she believes will bring her to the garden, but no matter the direction in which she goes, she ends up back at the house. Eventually she runs into a patch of flowers with a tree in the middle. She discovers that the flowers can talk, but they are quite rude, criticizing her lack of intelligence and her strange looks. The flowers think that she must be a flower as well, even if she looks wrong.

The flowers reveal that there is another person in the garden, which Alice surmises from their description of a flower that looks quite like Alice. Alice looks around and sees the Red Queen, who has grown to a little taller than herself. Alice expresses interest in meeting the Queen, even though the flowers advise against it.

But when Alice tries walking toward the Queen, she finds herself in front of the house again. This time, she tries walking in the opposite direction in which she wants to go, and she finds herself walking almost straight into the Queen.

The Queen demands that Alice curtsey and call her "your Majesty" when they speak to each other. Alice tells the Queen that she wants to get to the hill in the distance, and when the Queen calls it a valley, Alice accuses her of speaking nonsense, but the Queen only then claims that she is making sense.

When the pair reaches the hill, Alice notices that the countryside is divided into regular squares. She realizes that the whole world is a chess game, and she very much wants to join the game. All of the sudden, she realizes she and the Queen are running, and when they slow down, the Queen explains that in this world, one has to run to remain in place.

The Queen assures Alice that she can play the game, and that she can even eventually be a Queen if she wants. She will start out as a pawn, however. The Queen gives Alice some instructions as to where she will have to go and whom she will meet, and then she vanishes.

**Analysis**

There are a couple of examples of allusion in this chapter. The episode of the talking flowers is actually a reference to the poem "Maud" by Tennyson. Additionally, the Rose and the Violet are meant to represent the two youngest Liddell sisters, Rhoda and Violet, who are otherwise not included in the Alice books.

The theme of inversion appears again when Alice tries to walk toward the Red Queen. Every time she walks in the direction, she sees the Red Queen, she ends up closer to the house where she started. But when she suddenly walks in the opposite direction, she ends up right in front of the Red Queen. It also appears within
the dialogue between Alice and the Red Queen. The Queen offers Alice a dry biscuit to quench her thirst, and she informs Alice that she must run in order to remain in the same place.

Carrollian scholar Roger Lancelyn Green speculates that the Red Queen is in fact a prototype for the governess of the Liddell children, Miss Prickett. He also argues that their mansion was the original Looking-Glass house, and that the land it looked out upon is the model for the land that Alice viewed as a chessboard when receiving instructions from the Red Queen.

The chessboard/game of chess as a metaphor for life is rather common in literature. Many authors/philosophers employ it, including George Eliot and William James. H. G. Wells opens his book *The Undying Fire* with a conversation between God and the devil, who are playing chess. God is the creator of the game and of the rules and can make as many moves as he likes, and the devil is responsible for introducing "a slight inexplicable inaccuracy into each move, which necessitates further moves in correction."

In *Through the Looking Glass*, Alice apparently has the ability to make her own moves, although it is not clear that the choice is entirely hers. This question is explored throughout the book. Indeed, as soon as the Red Queen tells Alice she is to be the White Queen's Pawn, she begins to run, although she cannot remember starting to run.

**summary and Analysis of Chapter 3**

**Summary**

Alice tries to survey the land before her, and she notices some elephants tending to enormous flowers like bees. She also notices that there are no rivers and that she is standing on what seems to be the only mountain in the place. Desiring to proceed to the third square, she leaps over the first brook in front of her.

She lands in a carriage and is immediately accosted by a guard asking for her ticket. She does not have a ticket and tries to explain herself, but all the passengers are chastising her for wasting time, breath and money. The passengers are all animals and insects. There is one passenger too small for her to see whispering in her ear.

When the train leaps over the next brook, she finds herself sitting beneath a tree and talking to a large gnat, which had previously been whispering in her ear. She explains to the gnat that she has never known any talking insects, and she proceeds to tell him the names of insects where she comes from. He then responds by telling her the equivalent insects in his world: the rocking horse fly, the snap-dragon fly and the bread-and-butter fly.

The two then discuss whether or not it would be convenient to be able to leave behind one's name. The gnat makes a joke and in so doing makes itself extremely sad. When Alice looks up, she finds that it is gone, and wanting to make progress, she walks on. She finds herself in a darker wood with a wood beyond it and assumes this is the wood where things have no names.

Because she is in this wood, she cannot remember her name or the names of things around her. She comes across a Fawn who suffers from the same predicament, and they move on together into the next wood. Here, she remembers, and she proceeds along the path with two finger-posts, both pointing in the same direction, but one for Tweedledee's house, and the other for Tweedledum's.

**Analysis**

Alice makes the typical two-square leap allowed a Pawn as its initial move. She starts in the second square, but as soon as she leaps a brook, she is in a train in the third square. This train takes her over a brook and into the fourth square.

The issue of naming things appears in this chapter twice. The first occasion is in the middle of the conversation between the Gnat and Alice. Alice makes an incredibly astute observation about names,
arguing that names are not actually important because they belong to things inherently but because they are useful tags for the person referring to them.

The second occasion involves Alice's short experience in the wood where things have no names. She forgets her name while she is here, although at one point, she believes it begins with an "L", undoubtedly because she has replaced the White Queen's daughter, Lily, in the game. She meets a fawn, with whom she rejoices once they exit the wood and remember their names.

The wood is supposed to represent the universe as well as Alice's observation. Things in the universe do not have signs or labels. Names are a product of the minds that need to organize and refer to them. Otherwise, they would not exist. This falls under the theme of imagination as well, or things merely existing as a part of a separate mind.

Alice's logical observation reveals her as a representation of Carroll, since he was so concerned with formal logic in his studies. Her rationality stands in sharp contrast to the nonsense of the Gnat, and will continue to do so with other characters. This and the consequences of her realization (the excursion in the no-name wood) is also a reminder that Alice is dwelling simultaneously in two worlds: that of the child and that of the adult. Her rationality places her in the world of adulthood, but it tends to get her into trouble in the Looking-Glass world, which might indicate a warning against her swift progress.

Summary and Analysis of Chapter 4

Summary

Alice comes upon Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and she immediately knows which is which because they have their names on their collars. They chastise her for not beginning a conversation with them, but she is distracted by the poem about the two engaging in a battle. She tries to elicit directions from them, but they continue to advise her on how properly to begin a conversation. When she tries to shake both of their hands at once, they grab her and begin to dance.

Once they stop, they decide to recite poetry for Alice. They recite "The Walrus and the Carpenter," which is basically a tale of a walrus and a carpenter who take a walk on a beach one day and invite some oysters to come along. Many of the young oysters agree and end up getting devoured by the walrus and the carpenter.

After the recitation, Alice admits that she prefers the Walrus because he at least showed remorse for eating the oysters. Tweedledee and Tweedledum argue that even so, he ate significantly more than the carpenter. When Alice changes her mind, they argue that the carpenter ate as many as he could. Alice is left confused about which character she prefers.

Alice hears a rumbling noise and fears that it is coming from some great beast in the woods. The two little men assure Alice that it is just the Red King snoring, and they go to look upon him. Alice is disappointed to see that he is just a rumpled mess. The men then try to convince her that she is just a character in the King's dream and that she is therefore not real. This makes Alice exceedingly upset.

They notice a white rattle on the ground, and this incites the battle between the two men that Alice was originally anticipating. She helps them get dressed in ridiculous outfits for their battle, and when they both complain about injuries, she uses the opportunity to encourage them to save their fighting for another time. At this, they agree to have a shorter fight, but then a monstrous crow flies overhead, and they all run for cover.

Analysis

Tweedledum and Tweedledee are enantiomorphs, which, according to mathematicians, are forms that are mirror images of one another. This is emphasized by the frequent use of the word "contrariwise." It is possible that the original nursery rhyme is an allusion to the rivalry between two composers, Handel and Bononcini.
The poem about the walrus and the carpenter is an important one, especially considering the discussion that follows it. The brothers want to know which Alice thinks is more contemptible, and it appears that she is unable to decide. The question poses a difficult moral dilemma, that involving whether it is right to judge a man by his actions or instead, by his intentions.

This chapter also poses metaphysical problems, for Tweedledum and Tweedledee claim that Alice is only a figment of the Red King's dream. This is more deeply interpreted as the philosophy that things are not real in themselves; Bishop Berkeley wrote that things exist only as "sorts of things" in the mind of God. Alice takes the more practical point of view.

Also, this idea of who is dreaming of whom shares an interesting parallel with the idea of mirrors. It is postulated that Alice is dreaming of the King, who is also dreaming of Alice, who still is dreaming of the King, which ends up being an infinite regress. The image is strikingly similar to two mirrors facing one another, reflecting infinitely themselves inside the other mirror. This idea also relates back to Tweedledee and Tweedledum themselves, who have been established as mirror images of one another.

**Summary and Analysis of Chapter 5**

**Summary**

Alice catches a shawl that happens to belong to the White Queen. The White Queen is just as rumpled as the Red King, and Alice finds that conversing with her is extremely confusing. When Alice comments on the Queen's bedraggled state of dress, the Queen tries to employ her. They get into an argument about the mode of pay; the Queen claims that one gets paid in jam every other day, but never today, though Alice insists that at some point it will have to be today.

The Queen also argues that the backwards way of living is best, because one's memory works in both directions. Alice tries to convince her that prosecuting a crime before it has happened is not right, but the queen argues that the punishment is good for the person apprehended. She puts on a band aid and screams because she anticipates pricking her finger while refastening her brooch, and indeed, after fumbling with it, she pricks her finger.

Alice suddenly becomes sad because she feels so alone in the woods. The Queen tries to console her by getting her to consider something else, anything else, and Alice finds that she is laughing at what the Queen is asking her to think about. The Queen insists that Alice should practice thinking about impossible things, and the two jump across the next brook together.

Alice finds herself in a dark shop with a sheep behind the counter. The sheep encourages her to make up her mind about what she is going to purchase, but Alice asks for time to look around before making up her mind. But when she tries to peruse the shelves, there is never anything on the shelf she is looking at.

She discovers that the sheep is knitting with 14 pairs of needles. The sheep asks her if she can row, and she says that she could only do so in water, and then she finds herself in a boat with the sheep. She notices some beautiful rushes and picks some, but their beauty fades once they are in the boat.

She suddenly finds herself in the shop again with the sheep asking what she wants, and when she asks for an egg, the sheep places it on the shelf. She is convinced that it is not a good policy to put things directly into a person's hand. When Alice reaches for the egg, it just moves farther away from her, and soon everything she approaches becomes a tree.

**Analysis**

In this chapter, the White Queen proposes the notion of "living backwards." Alice thinks this is a preposterous idea. The White Queen goes on to argue that one who is living backwards has a memory that functions in both directions, and that this is the optimal way of functioning.
This relates to Jan Gordon's hypothesis about Victorian literature and its presentation of childhood. The Victorian era was a difficult one for the notion of childhood. Many laws that previously applied only to adults were applied to children. Additionally, laws that specifically protected children were removed. Further, the thinking that madness was actually a state of perpetuated childhood began to develop.

Gordon proposes that because of this, the line between childhood and adulthood began to blur, especially in literature. The reader notices that the White Queen, and all the other "adult" characters in the book, do not really act like adults. They indulge in childhood fantasies, and Alice is left the burden of providing logical responses and make sensible decisions.

Alice's situation reflects that of children in her era. Carroll was probably attempting in his literature to capture the problem of children being forced to grow up too fast, just like J.M Barrie in Peter Pan. Alice has not parental role models for guidance on her journey, so she is forced to learn quickly and act the adult herself. Otherwise, she has no chance of reaching the eighth square.

There are a couple hypotheses about the dream-rushes and what they are meant to represent. It is possible that they are symbols of the author's child friends. The best is always out of reach. It is also possible that they represent the transience of youth and beauty, because once picked and held in hand, they quickly fade.

Alice's ability to balance an egg on its end on a flat surface alludes to Columbus' supposed accomplishment of the same feat. It might refer to an old gambling game in which the objective was to be the last person to place an egg on a napkin already crowded with eggs. None of the other eggs can be touched, and the winning strategy involves placing the first egg on its end in the very centre. Many solutions to the egg-on-its-end problem have been proposed, including cracking it slightly on the bottom, shaking it so that the contents are dispersed and the centre of gravity changes, etc.

**Summary and Analysis of Chapter 6**

**Summary**

The egg continues to get bigger and bigger, and it also has acquired human features, and it is sitting atop a rather narrow wall. Alice realizes that this must be Humpty Dumpty. He is offended by her remark that he looks like an egg. Because she is dissatisfied with the conversation, she recites the Humpty Dumpty poem to herself.

Humpty Dumpty asks her not to mutter to herself, and she expresses concern about him being seated so precariously on the wall. He argues that there is nothing to worry about, and before he can explain why, Alice says that it is because the king’s men will all come to put him back in his place. He asks her how she knows this, and she says she read it in a book.

Humpty Dumpty then asks her what her name means, and she says that names do not have to have meanings. He argues that her name is stupid because it could mean anything. Alice tries to change the subject by complimenting him on his belt, but he is quite insulted because it is a cravat. He remarks that it was a gift from White King and Queen.

Alice asks Humpty Dumpty to translate Jabberwocky for her, since she observes that he has a way with words. He provides ridiculous definitions for all of the words she does not understand, and when he is done, he offers to recite a poem for her. She does not really want to listen to a poem, but when she hears that he composed it just for her, she figures she should just listen.

He cuts it off rather abruptly and indicates that he thinks they should say goodbye. He remarks that because her face is so ordinary, he probably would not realize it if they were to ever meet again. Before she can respond, a great crash shakes the forest.

**Analysis**
This chapter includes another argument about names that relates to Carroll's interest in formal logic. Humpty Dumpty argues that his name and Alice's and proper names in general should have universal significance, whereas improper names of things can mean whatever he wants them to mean. Obviously, in the real world, this situation is reversed.

This episode in many ways relates back to the original nursery rhyme about Humpty Dumpty. Although it does not proceed in the same way, there are important references to note. For example, Carroll employs the word "proud" rather frequently in this chapter, which is meant to recall Humpty Dumpty's "pride that goeth before his fall."

Carroll is obviously capable of morbid humor, as evidenced by the part of the conversation between Alice and Humpty Dumpty in which they discuss age. Alice remarks that it is impossible for one to stop growing older. This is Humpty Dumpty's reply: "One can't, perhaps, but two can. With proper assistance, you might have left off at seven."

Humpty Dumpty is likely a satire of a certain type of intellectual. He has clear strengths and weaknesses. He of course claims that he is good at everything, but it seems that his most likely specialization is linguistics. The humor is evident because even though Humpty Dumpty can talk extensively about words and language, he is utterly helpless when it comes to mathematics, which was Carroll's own field of expertise.

The story of Humpty Dumpty is also an allegory for the fall of man from grace as well as the fall of the devil for his pride. This also relates to the issue of childhood and the "fall of innocence" that accompanies the progression to adulthood. Perhaps Humpty Dumpty is meant to be a lesson for Alice, though it seems she is already many steps ahead of him when it comes to maturity.

**Summary and Analysis of Chapter 7**

**Summary**

The rumbling in the forest turns out to be thousands of soldiers and horses that have been sent by the White King. When Alice stumbles upon the White King, he tells her that he is waiting for a messenger. Alice notices a man moving strangely along the road in the distance, and the King attributes his odd movements to his "Anglo-Saxon attitudes."

The man approaches, and when Alice and the White King speak to him, they use words starting with the letter H, since that is the letter that begins his name. He tells the king that "they" are at it again, and when Alice inquires about the situation, she finds out the lion and the unicorn are having a battle. She recalls the relevant rhyme, in which the lion and the unicorn fight for the crown (which is apparently the White King's) while people bring them bread and cake and try to drum them out of town.

The three head into town so they can witness the event. They run into the other messenger, whose name also begins with an H. The King notices the White Queen running in the distance, and when Alice asks why she is running so fast, the King explains that she is probably trying to escape an enemy. Alice wonders aloud why he does not come to her aid, and he explains that she is just too fast for that to be possible.

The unicorn approaches, and it seems that in the most previous round, he emerged the winner. He notices Alice but calls her a monster because he does not know what kind of creature she is. The others tell him that she is a child, and he agrees to believe in her if she will believe in him.

The characters share plum cake, and the lion and unicorn continue to be extremely competitive. All of the sudden, loud drumming interrupts the feasting, and Alice, frightened, jumps over the next brook to escape.

**Analysis**

The two messengers in this chapter have counterparts in Alice's Adventures. Hatta is the Mad Hatter and Haigha is the March Hare. The illustrations that accompany the story make this clear. Alice has met them before in her previous adventures, but she does not recognize them as characters she already knows.
In this chapter, Carroll emphasizes an important theme in his book. Throughout the work, he has been stressing the arbitrary nature of language. Alice remarks to the king that she sees nobody on the road, and he responds that she must have good eyesight to be able to see "Nobody."

This observation by the King points to the slippery nature of definitions. It plays with the definition of "nobody" and what it means to physically see something. Carroll is playing with his readers' understanding of language and forcing them to think twice about the way in which they use words in everyday speech. None of the characters in the Looking-Glass world speak normally, and most of them question language in an unusual and at the same time insightful way.

The battle between the lion and the unicorn is an episode from a popular nursery rhyme. Carroll is fond of including nursery rhymes within his works; Humpty Dumpty is another example of this tendency.

Summary and Analysis of Chapter 8

Summary

Alice finds herself alone again, but then she is intercepted by the White Knight, who claims that having come upon her, she is not his prisoner. However, he cannot seem to stay on his horse. Another knight approaches, the Red Knight, and they argue about whose prisoner Alice is. They then have a very clumsy battle to determine the captor.

The White Knight wins, though Alice could not really tell what decided the victory. But when he claims that she is his prisoner, she argues that she wants to be a Queen. He tells her that is not a problem, as he intends to see her safely to the next brook so that she can proceed to the next square and become a queen. Alice mounts his horse, which the Knight cannot seem to ride properly. He consistently slides off in all directions and lands on his head. While they ride, he tells Alice about all of his inventions: the box turned upside-down so rain won't get in, the beehive attached to his saddle, the pole that keeps hair from falling off, etc. Each of these inventions has a number of problems that Alice contemplates.

The Knight offers to sing Alice a song, and even though she is not interested, she agrees to let him sing to her. He sings about an old man who gives another man advice about how to live. Alice finds that she knows the tune, but the song does not make her cry, even though the knight insisted it would.

They reach the end of their journey, and the Knight requests that Alice see him off. She does, hoping that it encourages him, and then she jumps the final brook into the eighth square. When she lands, she realizes there is a gold crown on her head.

Analysis

At first it seems that the White Knight is a malevolent character in the story, because he tells Alice that he intends to take her prisoner. However, the reader discovers that he is a benevolent force in Alice's world, for he means to help her cross the last brook.

The crossing of this brook causes the White Knight great distress, for it signifies a significant move for Alice on the chess board of her life. She will move to the final square, where she is to become a Queen. While this causes the White Knight great sadness, Alice does not seem to be perturbed, even when he sings his song. The lack of tears from Alice indicates her blissful childhood ignorance.

The Red Knight who battles the White Knight represents a force of evil that means to hold Alice back from pursuing her destiny. Alice is amused as she watches the fight, unable to tell who is winning. This mirrors the ignorance she displays while listening to the White Knight sing; she obviously does not understand the importance of events leading to her destiny.

Some scholars believe that the White Knight is meant to be a caricature of the author. Carroll enjoyed inventing things and toying with odd objects. His physical appearance also mirrors that of the knight's:
messy hair, blue eyes and a kind face. It also makes sense considering the role that he plays in Alice's journey. Of all the characters Alice meets, only the White Knight seems to offer her direct help.

Summary and Analysis of Chapter 9

Summary

Alice wonders about the crown on her head until she sees that she is sitting on a throne in between the White and Red Queens. They begin to interrogate her, criticizing her manners, and claiming that she needs to take and examination before she can be a queen. They proceed to ask her trivia questions that Alice continues to get wrong because the answers are nonsensical.

The Queens discuss being tired, and soon they are asleep on Alice's lap. She tries to wake them unsuccessfully. She notices a door labelled with her name right in front of her, with a bell for visitors and one for servants. She wonders which one to ring and decides on the servants’ bell.

A frog responds, asking what she wants, and when she asks about the servants, he only provides her with an answer that does not make sense. He tells her to stop harassing the door, and then he departs. Alice suddenly hears a chorus of voices singing about her and about a feast in her honour.

She proceeds through the door and finds herself at a table with about 50 guests. The Red and White Queens are sitting at the head of the table, so she joins them. The servers bring out various dishes, but instead of eating them, the queens just introduce them to Alice and encourage her to introduce herself. When she tries to offer them portions, they argue that it is rude to cut something she has just met.

She discovers that her voice has a commanding effect, and that when she speaks, not only do servants respond immediately, but everything also becomes silent. She asks why so many of the characters she has met like to sing about fish, and the White Queen offers to sing her own fish-themed song. Alice encourages her, and after the queen is finished, both queens encourage Alice to make a speech. They offer to help support her, and though she refuses, they proceed to squeeze her as she begins. She finds herself rising as she tells her audience that she rises to give thanks. Suddenly, one of the queens warns her that something is about to happen, and indeed, several things unfold at once. The dishes and utensils all begin to move about, and the queens actually shrink. Alice realizes that she is too excited to be shocked as she grabs one of the tiny queens and shakes her with all her might, claiming she will turn her into a kitten.

Analysis

This chapter begins with a test, by which it will be determined if Alice is worthy of the crown she wears. The queens are rather hostile towards Alice, claiming that every response she provides is wrong and intimating that she is not ready to be a queen. It is likely that they treat her in this manner because there is much at stake; Alice must leave her examination a grown woman.

The Red Queen makes an allusion to the game of chess while she is asking Alice trivia questions. When Alice tries to take back one of her answers, the Red Queen does not allow her, remarking that "when you've once said a thing, that fixes it, and you must take the consequences." This is an allusion to the fact that you can't take back a move in chess once you've made it. You cannot even change your mind once you've touched a piece.

The feast is a strong metaphor for coming-of-age. During the feast, amidst all of the chaos, Alice literally finds her voice, and realizes that she can make things happen by asserting herself. She even makes the dream end by grabbing the queen and shaking her, a clear act of control and aggression. It is during this moment that she gains clarity, threatening to turn the queen into a kitten. Alice stepped into this dream out of reality, where she was surrounded by kittens.
Speech is also an important symbol. As soon as Alice finds her voice, the queens call on her to use her newfound power. But Alice is reluctant, which only emphasizes the transitional period in which Alice inevitably finds herself.

Summary and Analysis of Chapters 10-12

Summary

Alice shakes the queen, who appears to become smaller and fatter and whose eyes grow larger and greener. It turns out that the queen is actually Kitty. Alice tells Kitty that she was with her throughout the entire dream. She speculates about cats' tendency to purr, and she discusses her frustration with trying to figure out what is being said when the same noise is repeated over and over.

She picks up the Red Queen from the table and tries to get Kitty to admit that she was the Red Queen, but Kitty does not seem to want to look at the chess piece. She looks over at Snowdrop, who is still having her cleaning from Dinah, and she concludes that the White Queen must have been so dishevelled in her dream for this reason. She believes that Dinah must have been Humpty Dumpty.

Alice finally wonders who was dreaming all along. She believes that she might have been the one dreaming. It could also have been the Red King, since she was convinced that she had been a part of his dream. The narrator concludes by asking the reader who they think was dreaming all along, and follows the question with a poem about summers and dreaming and Wonderland.

Analysis

The Annotated Alice reflects on the significance of the poem at the end of the work. "In this terminal poem, one of Carroll’s best, he recalls that July 4 boating expedition up the Thames on which he first told the story of Alice’s Adventures to the three Liddell girls. The poem echoes the themes of winter and death that run through the prefatory poem of Through the Looking glass. It is the song of the White Knight, remembering Alice as she was before she turned away, with tearless and eager eyes, to run down the hill and leap the last brook into womanhood. The poem is an acrostic, the initial letters of the lines spelling Alice’s full name."

A nostalgic tone pervades the end of the book. Carroll reveals that all of Alice's experiences were part of a dream, and she spends the last chapter desperately trying to hold on to these experiences by speculating about the author of the dreams. But Carroll reveals that this is not the important question. Rather, the reader is meant to focus on the fleeting nature of childhood and its fantasies, reflected by the many things and events Alice encountered in the Looking-Glass world that were present one moment, but over and gone the next.
Major Themes

Reflection/Reversal

The most apparent example of this theme is the looking-glass itself, which provides a reflection of the actual world for Alice to explore. Within the looking-glass, everything is backwards. Text is reversed: Alice reads the poem Jabberwocky backwards. Space/direction is inverted: Alice must walk away from where she wants to go in the garden in order to actually get there. Ideas are also inverted, which is plain in many of the conversations that Alice has with the characters encountered in the looking-glass world. Tweedledee and Tweedledum are mirror images of each other. The White Knight talks about putting a right foot into a left shoe. In the railway carriage, Alice is traveling in the wrong direction.

Satire

Carroll does not mean this tale to be serious. For one thing, an imaginative child who talks to cats is the protagonist, and it is she who leads the reader through the book. Additionally, there is no sense of consistency in the book; as soon as a rule for the looking-glass world is introduced, it is either abandoned or changed. Further, Carroll appears to be poking fun at adult intellectualism. All the characters who attempt logical debate either argue themselves into confusion or lose to a seven-year-old Alice.

Dreaming

Carroll sets his entire book in the context of a dream. Whose dream it is remains unclear, but Alice definitely acknowledges that she was having adventures in someone's dream, if not her own. What is so important about this is the fact that the absence of reality does not matter to the protagonist, and it clearly does not matter to the author. In fact, Carroll seems to believe that dreaming is the ideal, especially for young children, as suggested by the poem at the very end of the book. He goes as far as to suggest that there might not be any set reality at all, and that life is just the stuff of dreams.

This nonchalance about the issue of what is real and what is not is partly what makes Alice such a compelling protagonist. The precocious Alice takes everything in stride. In a way, her vast imagination allows Carroll to expose the reader to a multitude of fantasies. And because Alice never ultimately passes judgment to the point of denying these whimsies, the author is able to bring his reader into an intricate world entirely of his own invention.

Alienation

Alice is in fact alone through much of the story, though not as much literally as figuratively. She is the only one of her kind in the Looking-Glass world, so even though she is surrounded by creatures pretty much at all times, she has trouble relating to their foreign ways. She is also isolated from the rest of her family due to her imagination; there is a reference to the frustration she causes when she plays pretend. At many points in the story, the reader has the sense that Alice has no place to go to feel at home; she expresses her loneliness while in the Looking-Glass world, but she immediately rebounds and worries about ultimately having to end the game and return to her house.

Adulthood

Carroll's attitudes toward adulthood are not entirely clear in the book, though the book itself can be seen as a motif for the progression from childhood to adulthood, as represented by Alice's journey as a pawn to queenhood. She undergoes many experiences that can be seen as crucial for development, such as the discovery of identity that is demanded by the situation in the wood of forgetfulness. Many of the poems recited focus on the theme of passing youth. However, the incompetence and immaturity of those that may be considered adult characters in the book calls the idea of a progression into question. Alice often proves to be smarter, more thoughtful and more resourceful than the “adults” she encounters in the looking glass.

Moral Choice and Social Etiquette
There are many cases in *Through the Looking Glass* in which the question of control and intentionality come into play. Looming over the entire novel is the question of whether Alice's adventures were really just a figment of the Red King's dream. Additionally, it is unclear whether Alice has any choice about moving from the second to the eighth square, and there are a number of instances during which she seems to question her goal.

Carroll, as a Victorian era author, is concerned about the methodical, logical examination of behaviour. Within almost every conversation Alice has with the characters in the Looking-Glass world is at least one critique of their social norms. But these are not serious critiques, for it has been established by the author that everyone in this world lives backwards, and as Alice has observed, many aspects of living backwards seem impossible. Inevitably, though, this often-nonsensical evaluation of rules might indeed be a comment on the burdensome obligations of adulthood and the moral/social responsibilities that accompany it.